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DEPARTMENT OF STATE

AIRGRAM

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ORIGIN/ACTION

ARMY	CIA	NAVY
3	16	5
26	7	1

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HANDLING INDICATOR

TO : Department of State
TAGS: PINS, GT
EO 11652: XGDS 2

INFO: USCINCSO

Mar 19 10 05 AM 1975

FROM : Amembassy GUATEMALA

DATE: 15 Mar 75

SUBJECT: Internal Security: Monthly Report of Incidents of Political Violence, February 1975

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SUMMARY: The number of press-reported incidents of political violence dropped sharply in February, with only 25 incidents reported. This number broke the previous record low set almost five years ago. No significant activity by the PGT took place. A number of people identified with right-wing political groups were killed during February. Violence on the South Coast tapered off markedly. END SUMMARY.

I. Statistics. The number of press-reported incidents of political violence showed a sharp drop in February. Only 25 incidents were reported, down from the January total of 41. February's total broke the August 1970 record low of 28 incidents, and it was also the first time since August 1970 that the number of incidents has dropped below 30. There were only 3 attributed incidents. The traditionally violence-prone oriente region accounted for 12 of the reported incidents. The South Coast, which in January accounted for almost half of the total incidents, had only 2 reported incidents during February. There were 18 killings, 6 kidnappings, and one intimidation shooting. Three of the persons killed showed signs of torture. Targets of February's incidents included an opposition congressman, the son of a PID regional leader, two comisionados militares, and one mayor.

II. Attributed Incidents.

To the Left. No incidents involving members of the PGT were reported during February. The PGT appeared to be

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REVIEWED BY DATE
PORTIONS DENIED AS INDICATED

7 OCT 1981

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maintaining a low profile while concentrating on internal reorganization.

To the Right. The most prominent incident was the February 11 intimidation attempt against DCG congressman Luis Enrique Guillén Funes. Shots were fired in his direction by men in an automobile, and Guillén later claimed that he had also been receiving telephoned threats against his life. The DCG blamed "fascist minorities," i.e., the MLN, for the incident.

Comment: Guillén, who has recently come to play an active role as a DCG member of Congress, had been involved in the move to interpellate Minister of Government Vassaux. The intimidation attempt may have been linked to the interpellation, but it merely served to dramatize DCG claims about violence in the country. End comment.

[REDACTED] Ruben
Villeda Chazres, a relative of former MANO triggerman José Victor Duarte Villeda, was found shot to death February 4 in United Nations Park. His body, and that of Felix Sarceño Zuñiga (who was found shot to death the same day), were both reported to have had MLN identification cards on them when found. B-1
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III. Unattributed Incidents. Violence in February seemed to involve an inordinately high number of family affairs in addition to the Villeda-Duarte connection. On February 19, an apparent relative of Felix Sarceño Zuñiga was kidnapped by men in olive green and carrying submachineguns. At the end of the month he had still not appeared.

On February 8, Ramiro Rodriguez Galván was machinegunned in Chiquimula along with 5 other people. Rodriguez Galván was a first cousin of Landelino Galván Lemus, who in January was machinegunned at a Chiquimula gas station. Galván Lemus had been described to us as a member of the Arana security force in Chiquimula. Rodriguez Galván had apparently been the only intended victim of his two

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assailants, and the five others were killed when they either attempted to assist Galván or when they stumbled onto the scene.

Another family affair also took place in Chiquimula. On February 25 the mayor and local MLN director of San José la Arada was gunned down by men carrying submachine-guns. The shooting was so sudden and swift that the mayor's three bodyguards didn't get off a shot. Two days before, two of the mayor's relatives, both comisionados militares, had also been machinegunned near Esquipulas. One press report claimed that the killing of the two comisionados had been an "ajusticiamiento".

[Comment: Violence in Guatemala's oriente is not a sometimes thing, and vendettas are part of the local violence. Although the February killings involved persons who would have been relatively unusual victims if they had been killed during the last few months of the Arana regime, there is no indication that they had important linkages to national politics. We therefore interpret these killings as probably involving a mix between local political and personal revenge. End comment.

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EXEMPTION CATEGORY 5B (2)

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